Protest is a way of raising issues, a way of influencing political parties, a way of influencing the way in which all of us might think about something, and a way of influencing what might actually happen.

Protest has actually been in the news recently, because there have been attempts to reduce the right to protest. There is a new government crime bill, which is currently making its way through the Houses of Parliament[[1]](#footnote-1), and part of it is trying to reduce the right to protest, where protests might cause disruption.

But, isn’t disruption the heart of protest?
How else is a small group of people going to get their message heard by other people, or by the government, or by their employer?

If you, and everyone you work with, are unhappy with your working conditions, of course you start by having a conversation with your company or with your employer. If that doesn’t work, then what do you do? Well, you could give up, but that doesn’t make things any better. So, you organise some sort of protest.

Now, your protest could be in the park on Sunday afternoon, but how is that going to make your company or employer pay any attention? Why should they care?

Or, your protest could be outside the factory gates, on Monday morning. Making it uncomfortable for your employers as they have to drive past you, and all your colleagues, all of you looking thin and undernourished because they aren’t paying you enough. Well, that might get their attention. Even better, the local news might report on it, and your employers might be embarrassed into some sort of action.

If that still doesn’t work, then do you push things a bit further? Do you perhaps try to stop trucks delivering to your factory? That would technically be illegal – blocking the public highway – but would a small illegal thing be OK, if the greater good was to get fair pay for everyone at the company? It’s illegal, but you’re stopping the traffic, not murdering children in their beds.

Would a small illegal thing (civil disobedience) be OK?

Have a listen to [this podcast about Protest](https://shows.acast.com/taking-the-party-out-of-politics/episodes/protest), and about [XR](https://extinctionrebellion.uk/) (Extinction Rebellion[[2]](#footnote-2)), which has been one of the most high-profile protest groups of recent years.

Think about these questions:

* Do you agree with the methods which XR uses?
* Do you think that they get the right balance (at least, most of the time)?
* Has XR succeeded in raising the issue of the Climate Emergency? For you? For your friends? For the Government?
* If you were XR, what other ideas could you try?
Email info@talktogether.info with your best ideas, and we will not only pass them on to XR, but we might include you in a future podcast episode.
1. If you are interested in the various steps involved in that, have a listen to Episode 15 ‘Parliament’ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The latest XR demonstration is in London on Saturday 9th April 2022. It is likely to continue for many days. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)